REMARKS

Claim Status

Applicant's Claims 22, 28, 29, and 32-42 are pending in the present application. No additional claim fee is believed to be due. Claim 31 has been cancelled. Claims 22, 29, 33, 34, 38, 39 and 40 have been amended. It is believed these changes do not involve any introduction of new matter. Consequently, entry of these changes is believed to be in order.

Rejection Under 35 USC §103(a) Over Santhagans Van Eibergen (US Patent 6,671,961)

The Examiner rejected Claims 22, 29, 31, 35, 36, 39, 41 and 42 under 35 USC §103(a) over Santhagans Van Eibergen et al. (US Patent 6,671,961), hereinafter Santhagans Van Eibergen.

Santhagans Van Eibergen neither describes nor suggests ... providing a housing including a generally rectangular recess having four side walls and carrying a guard member, providing a plurality of elongated metal razor blades, each blade having a cutting edge and first and second longitudinal ends, securing said first longitudinal ends to a first plastic block and said second longitudinal ends to a *separate* second end block in slots on said first and second plastic blocks such that said cutting edges collectively define a shaving surface, and said blades and blocks provide an integrated blade subassembly, wherein no part of said integrated blade subassembly extends beyond an outer surface of said blocks, and inserting said integrated subassembly into the rectangular recess wherein said guard member is in front of said blades ... as recited in Applicant's newly amended base method Claim 22, nor in similar elements recited in Applicant's newly amended base apparatus Claim 29.

Santhagans Van Eibergen's cutting blades 5 and skin supporting members 11, 13 are mounted to a sub-frame 9 which is coupled to a main frame 19. The Examiner

equates Santhagans Van Eibergen's sub-frame 9 with Applicant's blocks. However, Applicant maintains that as shown in Fig. 3, Santhagans Van Eibergen's sub-frame 9 extends around the base and across the entire length of the blades as a monolithic piece and thus, is not represented by two separate pieces or two blocks at either end. This is further evidenced by the fact that Santhagans Van Eibergen's sub-frame 9 has four corners 49 (see Santhagans Van Eibergen, Fig. 3) rather than eight corners that would result by having two separate end blocks as provided in Applicant's instant invention. Applicants have amended Claims 22 and 29 to recite first and second blocks as being separate.

The Examiner states that Applicant is attempting to redefine "block" as a standalone object with nothing attached to it contrary to Applicant's specification. The Examiner further states that Applicant has blades affixed to his blocks and yet still calls them blocks. Applicant disagrees with the Examiner's remarks. Applicant defines a *blade subassembly 13* as including five blades 14 and *two* side plastic end blocks 24. (See Applicant's specification page 4, lines 21-22 and figs. 3-9). Hence, Applicant does not refer to the blocks as including the affixed blades, but rather the subassembly as including the affixed blades as recited in Applicant's base Claim 22 for instance, "said blades and blocks provide an integrated blade subassembly". Accordingly, Applicant maintains that he affixes blades to two separate end blocks whereas Santhagans Van Eibergen affixes blades to one block or sub-frame 9. Thus, Santhagans Van Eibergen does not disclose *first and second blocks* to secure first and second longitudinal ends of blades as recited in Applicant's base Claims 22 and 29.

Consequently, these rejections are traversed as Santhagans Van Eibergen does not establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness because it does not teach or suggest all of the above-mentioned claim limitations of base Claims 22 and 29, and therefore it follows that it does not establish a case of obviousness for Claims 35, 36, 39, 41 and 42, which depend from Claim 29. (See MPEP 2143.03). Therefore, the claimed invention is unobvious and the rejection should be withdrawn.

Rejection Under 35 USC §103(a) Over Francis (US Patent 3,940,853)

Claims 22, 28, 29, 35, 38 and 40 have been rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Francis, US Patent 3,940,853.

Francis neither describes nor suggests ... providing a housing including a generally rectangular recess having four side walls and carrying a guard member, providing a plurality of elongated metal razor blades, each blade having a cutting edge and first and second longitudinal ends, securing said first longitudinal ends to a first plastic block and said second longitudinal ends to a separate second end block *in slots* on said first and second plastic blocks such that said cutting edges collectively define a shaving surface, and said blades and blocks provide an integrated blade subassembly, wherein no part of said integrated blade subassembly extends beyond an outer surface of said blocks, and inserting said integrated subassembly into the rectangular recess ... as recited in Applicant's newly amended base method Claim 22 (or similar Claim 38), nor similar elements recited in Applicant's newly amended base apparatus Claim 29 (or similar Claim 40).

Francis discloses a razor blade unit in the form of an elongated blade member and means engaged with the blade member and in compression to strain the ends of the blade member apart. (See Francis abstract). Francis does not disclose or suggest slots in first and second plastic blocks.

Applicant asserts that Francis' use of metal spacers 44, which are rigidly secured to the blades to create a spaced parallel relationship while also providing tautness or strain to the ends of the blades (Francis, col. 3, lines 45-49), teach away from the use of or necessity for first and second blocks with slots to receive longitudinal ends as recited in Applicant's base Claims 22, 29, 38, and 40. Applicant notes that Francis' steel spacers are secured in between the blades by spot welding. (See Francis, col. 4, lines 35-40). By securing the ends of the blades into slots in the blocks Applicant's blades are to an extent, free floating in subassembly prior to connection to the housing. (See Specification, page 5 and Figs. 9-11).

Applicant further contends that additional pairs of spacers would necessarily have to be added in the Francis design for each blade added, whereas on the contrary, each of Applicant's base claims recite the use of a first and second plastic end block for a plurality (2, 3, 4, 5 or more) blades.

With regard to Applicant's Claims 38 and 40, Applicants have amended these claims to include slots in first and second blocks and as noted above, Francis does not describe or suggest first and second blocks with slots. Additionally, Applicant maintains their previous argument that Francis' additional blade unit elements are precluded and do not meet the "consisting of" limitation set forth in Applicant's claims. Applicant recites "an integrated blade subassembly *consisting of* said first plastic block, said second end block and said blades" (Claim 38, emphasis added) and "a blade subassembly *consisting of* ... a plurality of ... blades, ... and first and second plastic blocks...to provide an integral unit..." (Claim 40, emphasis added). Applicant notes that Francis' blade unit comprises a pair of blade members, a pair of spacers, and a wedge member. (For example, see Francis, cols. 3, line 61 to col. 4, line 16.)

Accordingly, these rejections are traversed as Francis does not establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness because it does not teach or suggest all of the above-mentioned claim limitations of Claims 22, 28, 29, 35, 38 and 40. (see MPEP 2143.03) Therefore, the claimed invention is unobvious and the rejection should be withdrawn.

Rejection Under 35 USC §103(a) Over Santhagans Van Eibergen (US Patent 6,671,961), as modified above, and further in view of Anderson (US Patent 5,282,316)

Claims 22, 29, 31-35, 36, 39, 41, and 42 have been rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Santhagans Van Eibergen in view of Anderson.

Santhagans Van Eibergen neither describes nor suggests, whether taken separately or together with Anderson, ... said first and second longitudinal ends and said slots have mating locking structure to secure said first and second longitudinal ends to said first and second plastic blocks...as recited in Applicant's dependent Claim 32; nor... said locking structure includes projections projecting into said slots that engage holes through said

longitudinal ends...as recited in Applicant's dependent Claim 33; nor ...said longitudinal ends have a thickness that is greater than the width of the slot minus the height of the projection...as recited in Applicant's Claim 34.

Santhagans Van Eibergen, as the Examiner submits, lacks projections that hold the blade in place. The Examiner cites Anderson as having projections 19 that extend through the end of the blade and states that one of ordinary skill in the art would modify Santhagans Van Eibergen by providing projections to more securely hold the blade. Anderson discloses a hand-held tool for cutting articles such as twine and packaging. Anderson's stud 19 holds a razor blade in place by projecting out from the device 10 into an opening in the razor blade 18. Even assuming arguendo one of skill in the art would be motivated to combine Santhagans Van Eibergen with Anderson, the resulting device would still not result in the instant invention lacking recited elements found in Applicant's base Claim 29 as discussed above.

Accordingly, these rejections are traversed as the cited references do not establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness because they do not teach or suggest all of the above-mentioned claim limitations of Claims 22, 29, 32-35, 36, 39, 41, and 42. (see MPEP 2143.03) Therefore, the claimed invention is unobvious and the rejection should be withdrawn.

Rejection Under 35 USC §103(a) Over Santhagans Van Eibergen (US Patent 6,671,961)

The Examiner rejected Claim 37 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Santhagans Van Eibergen.

Santhagans Van Eibergen neither describes nor suggests ... said plurality of elongated metal blades includes at least four said blades ... as recited in Applicant's dependent Claim 37.

Applicants contend that Santhagans Van Eibergen does not disclose or contemplate having *at least* four blades as recited in Applicant's dependent Claim 37 and, as the Examiner submits does not explicitly discuss having more than three blades, i.e.

four or five blades. Accordingly, the above rejection is traversed as Santhagans Van Eibergen does not establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness because it does not teach or suggest all of the above-mentioned claim limitations of Claim 37. (see MPEP 2143.03) Therefore, and for the reasons discussed above in conjunction with base Claim 29, the claimed invention is unobvious and the rejection should be withdrawn.

Rejection Under 35 USC §103(a) Over Francis (US Patent 3,940,853) in view of Santhagans Van Eibergen (US Patent 6,671,961)

Claims 39, 41 and 42 have been rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Francis, US Patent 3,940,853 as modified above and further in view of Santhagans Van Eibergen, US Patent 6,671,961.

Francis neither describes nor suggests, whether taken together or separate from Santhagans Van Eibergen a ... lubricating strip carried by said housing ... as recited in Applicant's dependent Claims 39 and 41; nor... said guard is positioned adjacent one wall of the recess and said lubricating strip is positioned adjacent an opposite wall of the recess...as recited in Applicant's dependent Claim 42.

Accordingly, the above rejection is traversed as Francis and Santhagans Van Eibergen do not establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness because they does not teach or suggest all of the above-mentioned claim limitations of Claims 39-42 and for the reasons discussed above in conjunction with base Claims 22 and 29, the claimed invention is unobvious and the rejection should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

In light of the above remarks, early and favorable action in the case is respectfully requested.

This response represents an earnest effort to place the application in proper form and to distinguish the invention as now claimed from the applied references. In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of this application, entry of the amendments presented herein, and allowance of the pending Claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

THE GILLETTE COMPANY

By _____
Signature

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